



Measuring Peace, Justice and Inclusion

January 2025

SDG 16 Policy Brief

From Data to Action Strengthening Civil Justice with SDG 16.3.3

This brief explains the relevance of SDG indicator 16.3.3 as a ‘people-centred’ indicator of access to justice. It provides an overview of the methodology underpinning this indicator and gives pointers on how SDG 16.3.3 data can be used to increase access to civil justice. The brief provides important recommendations for policymakers and other stakeholders to promote the measurement and reporting on the indicator as part of overall support to strengthening people’s access to civil justice.

Access to Civil Justice in the 2030 Agenda

As part of target 16.3 of [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) 16](#) under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, all countries have committed to “*promote the rule of law at the national and international levels, and ensure equal access to justice for all*”.

For the purposes of SDG 16.3, access to justice refers to “*the ability of people to defend and enforce their rights and obtain just resolution of justiciable problems in compliance with human rights standards; if necessary, through impartial formal or informal institutions of justice and with appropriate legal support*” (Praia City Group, 2020; United Nations, 2023). The concept is informed by an understanding of the importance of due process, fair treatment and human rights. Three decades of legal needs surveys (OECD, 2019) around the world show that most common legal problems that people experience fall within the jurisdiction of the civil justice system (Peter Chapman & Alejandro Ponce, 2018; The Hague Institute for Innovation of Law, 2021). Access to justice for all people is not limited to the formal justice system. Rather it is about access to services, including dispute resolution mechanisms and legal assistance services, that are most appropriate to meet the legal and justice needs of a person in their circumstances while remaining affordable and sustainable. Access to justice needs to be people-centred. As underlined by the OECD Recommendation on Access to Justice and People-Centred Justice Systems (OECD, 2023), this approach places people at the centre of justice sector planning, reform and resourcing. People-centred justice takes a data-driven and evidence-based approach to justice, that can be reinforced and supported by target 16.3 of Sustainable Development Goal 16.



16.3.3: “Proportion of the population who have experienced a dispute in the past two years and who accessed a formal or informal dispute resolution mechanism, by type of mechanism.”

Civil justice problems encompass a diverse range of issues that individuals may face in their daily lives, such as land disputes, family matters, discrimination in accessing public services, pollution and environmental degradation (JURISTnews, 2024). According to estimates, 1.4 billion people have unmet civil justice needs (World Justice Project, 2023). Despite these important findings, there continues to be far too little knowledge about the prevalence and nature of these legal problems, and the extent to which people have recourse to legal mechanisms for their resolution. Further gaps include insights relating to the social and economic costs borne by individuals and the state when legal problems remain unresolved, and the strategies that are most effective to address such legal issues. These knowledge gaps need to be filled if countries are to make progress towards “ensuring equal access to justice for all”.

It is in this context that [SDG indicator 16.3.3](#) (Box 1) on “access to dispute resolution mechanisms” (OECD, 2018) was adopted by the UN Statistical Commission in 2020 to fill a critical gap not addressed by the initially selected indicators for target 16.3, pertaining to criminal justice only, namely the [crime-victimization reporting rate](#) and the [pre-trial detainees not yet convicted of a crime](#). SDG 16.3.3 aims to provide information about the types of legal problems faced by people, the overall accessibility of formal and informal dispute resolution mechanisms, as well as the barriers faced by service seekers. The disaggregation of data by the type of dispute resolution mechanism provides additional information about the channels used by individuals in an effort to seek justice and enforce or defend their rights.

Access to civil justice is a critical enabler for achieving sustainable development and achieving the SDG targets. Unresolved legal problems may create direct and indirect economic and social costs for individuals, communities and the state. These costs manifest, for example, through adverse impacts on health, unemployment, loss of housing or family instability, all of which bear serious social implications and place a strain on public funds (OECD, 2018). Research highlights that legal problems are often not isolated incidents but tend to co-occur, with individuals experiencing one justiciable problem likely to experience additional and cumulative legal problems (Pleasence et al., 2004). For instance, people may need to access justice institutions in various situations, such as when deprived of access to basic services (SDG target 1.4), when faced with discrimination in education (SDG target 4.5), when subject to discrimination against women and girls (SDG target 5.1), when experiencing physical, psychological, or sexual violence (SDG target 16.1), when seeking ‘equal pay for work of equal value’ (SDG target 8.5), when wanting their labor rights to be upheld (SDG target 8.8), or when demanding that equal opportunity laws be respected (SDG target 10.3).

In an increasingly polarized world, civil justice systems that fail to resolve disputes pose significant barriers to sustainable development. Research shows that experiences and perceptions of injustice and exclusion in civil justice processes, when coupled with economic stress or other barriers to access to justice, can deepen distrust and fuel conflict (New York: Center on International Cooperation, 2019). In such a context, enhancing access to justice for all, which is also known to increase public trust in institutions (Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor (CLEP), 2008), is essential.



Box 1. SDG 16.3.3: Advancing People-Centred Justice

SDG 16.3.3 relies on the following concepts and measures:

- **People-centred experiences**, measuring the experience of legal problems from the perspective of those who face them rather than the needs and views of service providers. Disaggregation by individuals' socio-demographic characteristics (such as age, sex, migratory background, etc.) and geographical variables allows for the identification of vulnerable groups/areas.
- In-depth assessment of how people address the problems they face, both **inside and outside of formal institutions or mechanisms**. SDG Indicator 16.3.3. provides a mechanism to monitor public policies that enhance the functioning of formal or informal dispute resolution mechanisms (top-down policies) as well as those that empower the population (bottom-up policies).
- Insights from household surveys across the world by **surveying a representative sample** of the population rather than relying on administrative data. The survey questions can provide **actionable data insights** on 16.3.3 and can be integrated into ongoing national surveys as an additional module on access to justice.
- **Cross-country comparisons on access to justice**, while also allowing for country-specific dispute resolution mechanisms and reasons for not using them.

Source: [SDG 16.3.3 Metadata](#); [OECD/Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies \(2023\)](#).

Measuring the accessibility of civil justice: SDG 16.3.3 - A people-centred indicator

SDG 16.3.3 is underpinned by the concept of 'people-centred justice', which refers to the justice sector adopting the perspective of people as a starting point and placing people at the core when designing, delivering, implementing and evaluating justice policies, services and legal procedures within and beyond the justice system. It takes into account the perspectives and needs of specific communities, including marginalised, underserved and vulnerable groups, e.g. women, children, indigenous groups, elderly and people with disabilities (OECD, 2021). This goal requires countries to revise the 'traditional' way of designing and delivering justice services based mainly on the needs or views of service providers. To deliver people-centred justice, countries must better understand people's everyday legal problems, including when and where they turn for assistance to solve these problems, and the challenges they face in their efforts to seek and achieve resolution (OECD/Pathfinders for Peaceful Just and Inclusive Societies, 2023).

Measuring people's access to civil justice can be a powerful tool, offering significant insights into the justice system and available services beyond simple enumerations of services. When individuals engage with dispute resolution services, they embark on specific pathways involving seeking information, advice, and assistance.

SDG indicator 16.3.3 encourages further exploration of various aspects of access to justice, including the availability of appropriate services and dispute resolution mechanisms, their location and proximity, their appropriateness, effectiveness, legal capability, public awareness, and availability of plain language information (Box 2).



Box 2. Key insights from SDG indicator 16.3.3 to inform policy-making

SDG indicator 16.3.3 can provide valuable insights and encourage further analysis into various aspects valuable for evidence-informed policy-making, including:

- **Availability of appropriate services and dispute resolution mechanisms.** This includes understanding people's awareness of available services and their preferences for certain services over others.
- **Location and proximity.** Each country's unique geography, demography, and infrastructure can influence service accessibility. Disaggregating SDG indicator 16.3.3 data by location, distance, and demographic group provides insights into alignment with for example transportation networks, how accessible they are and where they are most needed, particularly for groups with specific needs, such as indigenous communities, women, older adults, and young people.
- **Appropriateness of services.** By examining disaggregated data related to legal problem types and demographic variables, SDG indicator 16.3.3 can reveal whether the delivery of specific justice services — such as online, face-to-face, telephone, or multilingual options — is suitable for different groups. The data also highlights service usage (or non-usage) and effectiveness in meeting the needs of diverse populations.
- **Legal capability.** Factors such as literacy, life complexity, and psychological readiness influence people's vulnerability to legal problems and their ability to resolve them.
- **Awareness.** Using dispute resolution services indicates awareness of legal pathways. Insights on the under-representation or differing levels of awareness of alternative justice pathways may support communication strategies to address awareness gaps.
- **Availability of plain language information.** Ensuring individuals can easily understand their rights, as well as the services and pathways available is crucial. Plain language resources also support people with sufficient legal capability to resolve simpler issues through informal mechanisms. Data from SDG indicator 16.3.3 can prompt further investigation into the suitability of legal information for specific demographic groups and inform the development of tailored resources.
- **Effectiveness of services.** While comprehensive access to justice outcome assessments require specific research, the extent to which people use legal assistance and dispute resolution services can reflect their confidence and trust in those services.

Source: [OECD/Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies \(2023\)](#).

Improved justice data for people-centred systems

A new approach to justice data collection is needed for people-centred justice systems to be equipped with the data they need to deliver justice for all. Justice systems tend to be too reliant on administrative data from formal justice institutions, such as data from the police, courts and legal assistance providers, instead of also capturing the legal and justice needs of people (Chapman et al., 2021; OECD, 2019). Administrative data refers to information collected and maintained by formal justice institutions during their routine operations and management, such as from the police, courts and legal assistance providers. These datasets are typically structured and used for tracking, reporting, and decision-making.



Administrative data, while offering unique advantages over survey data, such as near real-time availability and the ability to monitor institutional processes and performance, provide an incomplete picture of justice. They fail to capture the experiences of those who do not come into contact with formal justice institutions and provide limited insights into the extent to which needs are met and justice is achieved across various types of problems. Moreover, administrative data from formal justice institutions often suffer from additional weaknesses, including incomplete coverage, poor capture of demographic characteristics, and limited data-sharing mechanisms, which make it difficult to piece together different administrative data to provide a holistic picture of access to justice (Chapman et al., 2021).

The methodology behind SDG indicator 16.3.3 builds on three decades of experience with legal needs surveys by governments, statistical agencies, development organizations and research institutions, for which the SDG 16 Survey Initiative is an important tool (Box 3). Additionally, the [Legal Needs Surveys and Access to Justice Guide](#) is designed to assess and improve access to justice, which can be aligned to be able to report on SDG 16.3.3. Created through collaboration between the Open Society Justice Initiative (OSJI) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), it offers a comprehensive and more detailed approach for designing adaptable legal needs surveys, enabling countries to identify justice gaps, inform evidence-based policies, and share good practices.

The vast majority of countries around the world do not yet routinely administer such surveys, often because of a lack of awareness of the indicator and resources and capacities to measure all SDGs and competing priorities (OECD/Pathfinders for Peaceful Just and Inclusive Societies, 2023). National reporting on SDG 16.3.3 thus provides an opportunity for countries to strengthen, and institutionalize, national survey data collection on civil justice, possibly through the regular conduct of more elaborate legal needs surveys.

Box 3. Measuring Access to Justice via the SDG 16 Survey Initiative

The SDG 16 Survey Initiative is a crucial instrument in the global effort to promote peace, justice, and inclusive institutions. Jointly developed by the UNDP, UNODC, and OHCHR, this initiative offers countries comprehensive and tested survey modules to gather data on various indicators related to justice, governance, violence, and discrimination. The SDG 16 Survey Initiative has been widely recognized by the global community and was welcomed by the 53rd United Nations Statistical Commission urging Member States to implement the survey, particularly where there is a shortage of robust data. By adopting this initiative, countries can better understand and address the persistent challenges of inequality, discrimination, and barriers to justice, creating a clearer path toward sustainable development and equal access to justice for all. One of the survey's unique features is its flexibility, as it can be implemented as a stand-alone survey, or survey modules can be integrated into ongoing national data collection efforts depending on data gaps and national priorities. The survey tool acknowledges national differences in institutions – for instance in the various dispute resolution mechanisms – while maintaining global comparability, allowing countries with limited data availability to effectively monitor their progress toward SDG 16 goals.

The 'Access to Justice' survey module allows countries and institutions to collect data on access to civil justice, helping to identify justice gaps and barriers faced by the population. The survey module covers key justice-related questions, going beyond the minimum data collection for SDG 16.3.3 to explore deeper issues like the quality of dispute resolution processes and access to legal assistance. A set of questions for measuring this indicator can be found in the Access to Justice Module of the [SDG 16 Survey Initiative Questionnaire](#). Further information on the module's implementation is available in the comprehensive [Implementation Manual](#).



Methodology underpinning SDG indicator 16.3.3

‘Access to justice’ is a multidimensional concept broadly concerned with “*the ability of people to defend and enforce their rights and obtain just resolution of justiciable problems in compliance with human rights standards; if necessary, through impartial formal or informal institutions of justice and with appropriate legal support.*”¹ This definition refers to at least six distinct dimensions of ‘access to justice’, namely: 1) the availability of formal or informal institutions to secure justice, 2) the quality of formal or informal institutions of justice, 3) the availability of legal assistance, 4) the quality of legal assistance, 5) the quality of outcomes and 6) legal capability (OECD, 2019). SDG indicator 16.3.3 focuses on the first one of these six dimensions, namely the availability and accessibility of justice institutions and mechanisms (both formal and informal) to those who have experienced a justiciable problem, including the barriers faced and the reasons for the exclusion of some people. The disaggregation by type of dispute resolution mechanism provides additional information about the channels used by individuals to resolve their problem (Box 4).

Box 4. Overview of dispute resolution mechanisms

Dispute resolution mechanisms differ significantly across contexts. In some settings, formal institutions, such as courts, are the main institution of addressing disputes, while in others, informal systems, such as community or religious leaders, or context specific mechanisms play a more important role. It is essential that these nuances are reflected in the data collection.

A list of dispute resolution mechanisms could include the below but should be adapted to the national context and the specific information needs of the country:

- Lawyer or third-party mediation
- Community or religious leaders or other customary law mechanisms
- A court or tribunal
- The police (or other law enforcement)
- A government office or other formal designated authority or agency
- Other formal complaints or appeal procedure
- Other external help, such as mediation, conciliation, arbitration

Source: [SDG 16.3.3 Metadata](#).

Quantifying the Justice Gap

Importantly, SDG 16.3.3 also quantifies ‘unmet legal needs’, often referred to as the ‘justice gap’ or the ‘dark figure’ of access to justice.² This important aspect of the indicator allows to distinguish between those who voluntarily self-exclude from accessing the justice system³ and those who wanted to access the justice system but were not able to do so. Prior research has shown the existence of various barriers in accessing dispute resolution mechanisms including language barriers, the cost of legal fees, geographical distance – especially for those living in remote rural areas, lack of information or fear of retaliation (OECD, 2019; World Justice Project, 2019a). Furthermore, gender and social norms including stigmatized behaviors and fear of retaliation can introduce barriers that disproportionately affect certain groups in society such as women and minorities. The distinction between the different types of barriers as well as detailed information for those that experience them allow to have a more targeted mitigating measure.

¹ Praia Group Handbook on Governance Statistics (2020). Chapter on “Access to and Quality of Justice”. <https://ine.cv/praiagroup/handbookon-governance-statistics/>.

² Those are individuals that experience disputes and do not turn to dispute resolution mechanisms because they do not need them (voluntarily self-excluded). It refers to cases where the dispute is simple or when respondents solve the issue with the other party through direct negotiation.

³ This aligns with SDG 16.3.1 (crime victimization), which measures the hidden figure of crime by capturing the experiences of people who do report and those who do not report their victimization to the competent authorities and their reasons for doing so.



In other words, the justice gap in the perspective of those who need it, the population, addresses an important information need regarding the functioning of justice and its accessibility. While administrative records provide essential information on case management, human resources, financial resources, and infrastructure, they cannot capture the population's experience with the justice sector. This reinforces the need for household surveys on legal needs.

Some countries are already implementing legal needs surveys that incorporate questions needed to compute SDG 16.3.3. However, for most countries, reporting⁴ on SDG 16.3.3 requires adding new survey questions to ongoing data collection efforts. A set of four survey questions is needed to provide sufficient evidence for SDG 16.3.3. These questions can be added to dedicated access to justice and legal needs surveys or to other ongoing general population surveys. For example, since 2015, **Kenya's National Bureau of Statistics** has incorporated these questions in its integrated household budget survey, including questions on dispute types, usage of dispute resolution mechanisms, status of resolution, and formal or informal payments made for using these mechanisms.⁵ In a further example, **Argentina** gathers data to report on SDG 16.3.3 through the dedicated legal needs survey administered by the National Directorate for the Promotion and Strengthening of Access to Justice (Ministerio de Justicia y Derechos Humanos, 2019). Lastly, the Attorney General's Office of El Salvador conducted a study in collaboration with UNDP-Infosegura to shed light on conflict resolution mechanisms in **El Salvador** and to inform public policies for equal access to justice (Box 5).

Box 5. Measuring individuals' experience and perception of accessing justice in El Salvador

In 2022, the Attorney General's Office of El Salvador conducted a study in collaboration with [UNDP-Infosegura](#) to shed light on conflict resolution mechanisms in El Salvador and to inform public policies for equal access to justice.

- **Mixed-method data collection:** The study used mixed methods, including a phone survey, workshops, and focus group discussions. Survey data was collected in April - May 2022, and the survey questionnaire was based on the SDG 16 survey 'Access to Justice' module (see Box 3). 1,516 respondents in the final sample (53%) reported experiencing a problem, conflict, or dispute during the last two years.
- **Key findings on access to justice and dispute resolution mechanisms:** Half of the individuals who reported experiencing a dispute in the last two years used formal or informal resolution mechanisms. However, access was unequal: younger people and those with lower education and income levels accessed these mechanisms less frequently. The type of conflict also played a role, with family matters, environmental issues, and money-related disputes mentioned most often. Problem resolution was higher among those who used conflict mediation mechanisms compared to those who resolved issues on their own. However, around one third of those using formal or informal mechanisms still faced unresolved conflicts.
- **Policy recommendations to improve access and efficiency of dispute resolution:** Although some legal problems were resolved formally, they persisted for certain individuals, highlighting the risk of recurrence. Barriers to accessing dispute resolution mechanisms should be addressed, such as reducing economic costs (e.g. transportation costs) through digital solutions, increasing knowledge and trust in justice institutions, and ensuring fair treatment. Additionally, multiple problems may require diverse resolution channels, with informal institutions – such as religious and community leaders – playing a significant role.

Source: [Acceso a justicia y resolución no violenta de conflictos en el Salvador \(2023\)](#).

⁴ Since 2022, all governments, in close collaboration with their national statistical agencies, are invited to annually report the indicator's progress to the three UN custodian agencies of this indicator - UNDP, UNODC and the OECD - via UNDP's SDG 16 Data Reporting Platform.

⁵ Kenya's National Bureau of Statistics, Basic Report: 2015/16 Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey (KIHBS), <https://www.knbs.or.ke/reports/kenya-integrated-household-budget-survey-2015-2016/>.



While the survey questions measuring SDG 16.3.3 do not constitute a comprehensive legal needs survey, the insights that these questions yield serves as an important starting point in countries where such surveys are not yet implemented. Additionally, the SDG 16.3.3 survey methodology can motivate a broader exploration of data collection, encouraging countries to expand their surveys to include in-depth questions that address their context-specific legal and justice-related needs.

Leveraging SDG 16.3.3 data to make civil justice more accessible and responsive

To design effective solutions to justice problems, governments must start by understanding their populations' legal needs and their experiences in accessing justice. As a global headline indicator on access to civil justice, SDG 16.3.3 aims to provide governments with high-quality data to inform evidence-based decisions to respond to people's justice needs. The insights collected have the potential to assist authorities in allocating limited resources in the most efficient way, informed by understanding use patterns and barriers in access to justice.

This section gives pointers on how countries can use SDG indicator 16.3.3 to improve the design and delivery of people-centred legal services by institutionalizing access to civil justice survey data collection to support the planning, delivery and monitoring of people-centred justice services.

Collecting feedback from justice users to strengthen the responsiveness of the justice system

Inclusive and responsive institutions and decision making are key features of SDG 16, and these principles should be integrated into efforts to collect data under indicator 16.3.3. In addition to ensuring that the collected data on access to justice and dispute resolution mechanisms is disaggregated, it is critical to understand and collect data on how different individuals experience the justice system. Collecting perspectives from a wide range of justice users can inform improvements in the justice system, enhance trust in legal institutions and enhance people's agency.

Catalyzing systematic survey data collection on legal needs and access to civil justice

Since the adoption of the SDG indicator 16.3.3, there has been a range of efforts by various stakeholders to support countries in collecting and reporting data under SDG 16.3.3. The 'Access to Justice' module within the SDG 16 Survey Initiative (see Box 3) includes the core survey questions needed for collecting and reporting data under SDG 16.3.3. Other tools and resources, such as the OSJI-OECD Legal Needs Surveys and Access to Justice Guide (OECD/Open Society Foundations, 2019), provide guidance for more detailed legal needs surveys, customized to country contexts.

Using disaggregated data to locate and identify the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups in accessing justice

Improving the collection of comprehensive and detailed survey data is necessary to ensure equal access to justice among all members of society. The appropriate planning and delivery of people-centred justice is contingent on ensuring a timely, accurate, and sensitive understanding of the geographic and demographic variability in justice needs. While strengthening the administrative data collection efforts of national justice systems is an important mechanism in ensuring the delivery of access to justice, it remains the case that in many jurisdictions, administrative data alone may not provide a sufficiently disaggregated picture of legal problems and the means for their redress (Chapman et al., 2021).



The likelihood of experiencing a legal problem is not the same for everyone. Research shows that some socio-demographic groups are particularly disadvantaged when it comes to experiencing serious problems and accessing justice (The Hague Institute for Innovation of Law, 2021). Specifically, research shows that people who experience various forms of systemic disadvantage – such as people with disabilities or people with lower household incomes – are most at risk of experiencing multiple justice-related problems in their lifetime (Smith et al., 2013).

Furthermore, research shows a significant gender gap in access to justice globally. Women and girls face multiple and unique barriers to accessing justice shaped by socio-economic and educational disadvantages, legal and institutional frameworks, disproportionate lack of information, social stigma and gender norms (World Justice Project, 2019b). 16.3.3 is a powerful tool that can provide disaggregated data to ensure that both women and men have equal rights and access to enjoy those rights.

The disaggregation of SDG 16.3.3 data is critically important to develop an intersectional understanding of justice needs, and to inform the delivery of people-centred justice when and where needed. SDG 16.3.3 data can help identify the geographical and socio-demographic characteristics within a national context that increase the risks of experiencing a legal problem and needing assistance. Detailed data on population groups can also inform targeted strategies for those most at risk of being left behind by the justice system. However, data disaggregation requires larger sample sizes, particularly given that a significant share of respondents may not have experienced a justiciable problem.

The strong association between individuals experiencing justiciable problems and their morbidity/disability underlines the case for considering individuals' health/disability status as a core socio-demographic variable for delving into the population differences on SDG 16.3.3. Similarly, broader associations between justiciable problems, disadvantage, and poverty highlights the need to consider socio-demographic data relating to employment status, family status, housing type, income, language, ethnicity, migration status, and social safety net assistance when disaggregating SDG 16.3.3 data (OECD, 2019).

Developing comprehensive justice data ecosystems and data partnerships across the justice sector

'Justice data ecosystems' need to be established, which combine administrative and survey data, as well as data from diverse justice service providers, from legal aid providers, civil society organizations, and community justice institutions, with formal justice institutions, including courts and the police, and other public sector actors (Chapman et al., 2021). Digital technologies offer the potential to broaden access to justice, provided their design, development, procurement, adoption, and deployment align with international human rights law and due process safeguards. Harnessing digital transformation to enhance equitable access to justice for vulnerable populations requires strict data protection and responsible data governance approaches (Byrom et al., 2024).

The most valuable insights are gained from the combination of data from different sources. For example, the limited knowledge of most individuals means they are unable to provide much insight into the technical aspects of access to justice, such as the location or availability of legal assistance services. If people are unaware that they live in close proximity to a legal aid office, or mistakenly believe they are ineligible for legal aid, they cannot attest to its availability. In this case, geospatial data, administrative data or an expert review of legal aid eligibility would be better sources of information. In many cases, the combination of indicators on population awareness and availability/eligibility may yield the greatest insights for policymakers.



Policy Insights and Recommendations

There is a significant lack of insight into how accessible legal recourse is for individuals, the social and economic impacts of unresolved legal problems on people and the state, and the most effective strategies to tackle these issues. Addressing this knowledge gap is essential for countries striving to achieve 'equal access to justice' and improve formal and informal dispute resolution mechanisms to deliver people-centred justice services:

Leveraging SDG 16.3.3 data to make civil justice more accessible

- Ensure regular measurement and monitoring of SDG 16.3.3 which is essential for monitoring and understanding the barriers to access to justice.
- Strengthen existing information campaigns to increase awareness of SDG 16.3.3. Consider promotional campaigns and capacity building to increase understanding of SDG 16.3.3 and the potential value of data collection for access to justice. Capacity-building programmes should be conducted for relevant stakeholders across agencies to improve their understanding of SDG 16.3.3 and the broader SDG agenda (OECD/Pathfinders for Peaceful Just and Inclusive Societies, 2023).
- Collect representative data and disaggregate it by socio-demographic and geographic factors is crucial for identifying the most vulnerable populations and the specific barriers they encounter in accessing justice.
- Ensure emphasis on collecting data on the experiences and perspectives of people using the justice system to ensure interventions are responsive to their needs.

Strengthening the justice data ecosystem

- Integrate diverse data sources generated by a range of data producers (such as National Statistical Offices, academia and civil society) and develop a comprehensive justice data ecosystem relating to both criminal and civil justice dispute resolution mechanisms is vital for gathering holistic evidence, particularly regarding the 'justice gap', including for individuals who have faced legal issues but not sought to access dispute resolution mechanisms.
- Establish a coherent governance framework for data collection among all involved actors and agencies, strengthen cooperation and communication and develop a long-term vision and planning of data collection cycles. There may be opportunities to involve other government bodies, academia, and civil society in inclusive data strategies for SDG indicator 16.3.3. Standards and processes should be developed to ensure quality control and testing of data, ethics and sound governance for data collection (OECD/Pathfinders for Peaceful Just and Inclusive Societies, 2023).
- Strengthen the capacity of justice sector actors to collect information on accessing justice, including through the empowerment of those at heightened risk of marginalization and vulnerability through targeted capacity development and empowerment programmes. Exploring potential infrastructure, training and personnel needs may help strengthen capacities for collecting data on SDG 16.3.3. Institutions responsible for data collection, analysis and reporting may need capacity-building support.

Harnessing the power of digitalisation

- Harness digital technologies to enhance equitable access to justice for vulnerable populations in line with human rights standards, strict data protection, and responsible data governance approaches that mitigate harm, and address the digital divide.⁶

⁶ [A/Res/78/277](#), para 8.



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